GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2853
ANSWERED ON:22.12.2003
SMUGGLING AND EXTINCTION OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS
SURESH CHANDEL

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of species and sub-species of plants and wild animals in the country;

(b) whether illegal trade in wild animals is most rampant and the killing of the wild animals continues unabated despite the existing laws and bans;

(c) if so, whether the Government proposes to enact stringent laws to protect the wild animals and plants getting extinct and to stop their smuggling; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the modus operandi to be adopted for the protection of the wild animals and plants?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE)

(a) As per the available record, it is estimated that there are nearly 48,000 species of plants and 81,000 species of animals in the country.

(b) to (d) Incidence of killing of wild animals and illegal trade in their parts and products are reported by various enforcement agencies from time to time. Government has recently amended the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 enhancing the penalties and has taken other measures for the protection of wild life and illegal trade. The details are at Annexure.

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (b) to (d) OF THE LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NUMBER 285 FOR REPLY ON 22.12.2003 REGARDING SMUGGLING AND EXTINCTION OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS BY SHRI SU CHANDEL.

Details of penalty enhancement and other measures for protection of wildlife

i) For offences relating to wild animals (or their parts and products) included in Schedule-I or Part-II of Schedule-II and those relating to hunting or altering the boundaries of a sanctuary or national park, the imprisonment prescribed is from three years to seven years and also a minimum fine of Rs.10,000/-. For a second or a subsequent offence of the nature mentioned above, the term of imprisonment shall not be less than three years but may extend to seven years and also with a fine which shall not be less than Rs.25,000/-.

ii) The Central Bureau of Investigation has been authorized to take cognizance of wildlife offences and prosecute offenders of poaching and illegal trade.

iii) Any equipment, vehicle or weapon used in committing wild life offence is liable for confiscation by the Government.

iv) The composition amount has been enhanced from Rs.2,000/- to Rs.25,000/-.

v) The provisions for rewarding the informers have been increased from existing 20% of the fine and composition money respectively to 50% in each case. In addition, a reward of upto Rs.10,000/- can be given to the informants and others who render assistance in detection of crime and apprehending the offender.

vi) Funding support is provided to the states for infrastructure and protection of wildlife under various centrally sponsored schemes.